2:Evans-Pritchard E-S (1931, 1936) 1951
F322 Nuer F322

595 guests who may be present. A husband may have a garden of his own, but, if so, he distributes the millet among his wives when their supplies are running short.

F322 The cattle belong to the husband. It is the usual practice for a
593 man to divide his cows among his wives, but they only have the use of them for milking and cannot dispose of them. A cow given to a wife is merely what Nuer call 'a cow of the churning-gourd', seeing that it is given to the wife only so that she may have milk for her little ones and butter and cheese to pour over her porridge. It is true that the husband ought not to dispose of the cow without consulting her, and I have heard a wife protest strongly that she had not been advised of her husband's intentions; but she cannot refuse her consent to its disposal for the benefit of the family. Nor can she dispose of it herself. When I asked some Nuer whether a wife could give a cow which she always spoke about as 'my cow' to her brother, they wondered whether I was joking: 'Could she do such a thing? Would not her husband kill her? Give one of his cows to her brother indeed! Eh he!' If a man dies, leaving only young children, and his wives remain in his homestead or live with his brothers, they continue to have use of the cows he allocated to them during his lifetime. A dying man may expressly direct that they should do so. However, the trustees of the animals are the dead man's brothers and their disposal is subject to the claims of the family as a whole and must be in their common interest. If a widow tried to remove the cows from the herd and take them to the home of her brother, or of some man with whom she was living in concubinage, her husband's kin would certainly not, except in very special circumstances, permit their dispersal, for the cattle belong to the lineage, to the sons as a whole, who are links between the ancestors and its as yet unborn members. If the sons are men when their father dies they ought to go on living together round a common kraal. Nevertheless, as will be seen, they frequently do not do so. Whether they do so or not, the cattle belong to all of them and should be used, when the herd is large enough, to obtain wives for them in order of seniority, though in practice they are sometimes a bone of contention. Even cattle which come to wives on the marriages of their kinswomen (the cow of the paternal aunt and the cow of the maternal aunt) are not their property in an absolute sense. They have the use of them and should their husband die their sons inherit them, but while the

2:Evans-Pritchard E-S (1931, 1936) 191
F322 Moore F322

623 husband is alive the beasts count as part of his herd and the wives
678 cannot dispose of them without his consent, which he can withhold. With the consent of the wife concerned, which she would find it difficult to withhold, he can dispose of them for marriages or other purposes.

A man also gives oxen to his sons so that they may display themselves in their company, but, here again, the sons do not have rights in them against their father, who can use the animals for any purpose he thinks fit, including the marriage of other sons than those to whom he has given the beasts, though he would promise a son deprived of his ox to replace it as soon as he could
623 do so. The only cattle a father cannot, or at any rate ought not to,
678 take for his own use without his sons' consent are those which come to them by inheritance, for these are *ghok pokwi*, cattle of the ghosts. They may come through a dead mother's right, or the son may be the child of a ghost-marriage or a leviratic marriage and have a right to the herd of his sire, which should not be set aside by the man who is acting in his father's place.

679 The family is an economic unit. Its members, with aid in cer-
462 tain undertakings from kinsmen and neighbours, maintain themselves and provide for their daily needs. None of the broader departments of economy are exclusively the domain of either sex and there is often direct mutual assistance between the sexes in the performance of tasks. Also, tasks which are normally performed by one sex may be performed by the other in circumstances which render this necessary. Nevertheless, there is a clear, and complementary, division of labour between men and women. Boys' work is mostly within the sphere of men's activities, the older boys performing many adult tasks, and, except for milking, they take no part in labour which is never done by men. Girls have the same duties as women, to the extent their age permits.

Most of the labour connected with the flocks and herds falls to the men and boys. The work of gardens is shared equally between men and women, sons assisting their mothers and the husband his wives. Only men hunt, and they and the boys do by far the greater part of the fishing. Women collect wild fruits and roots. Men do most of the building and repair of byres and huts, though women do some of the lighter tasks in these activities. Most of the daily tasks of the home, especially the preparation of food by churning, pounding, grinding, cooking, and brewing, are the

5:Howell E, G-5 (1942-1944):1954
F322 Nuer-F322

583 has been passed on in other marriages. It is also in the interests of the husband to protect and care for his wife, for if harm should befall her through ill-treatment or carelessness on his part, he may lose his wife and find difficulty in getting his cattle back.

(v) It serves as legal indemnity for the loss of the woman's services to her own family and kin, particularly her economic and domestic services, and since, in an exogamous patrilineal society, she cannot bear children to her kinsmen, bridewealth provides them with the means to marry and raise children to their own name. The social equilibrium is thus maintained, the patrilineal identity of the lineage preserved, and its continuity in posterity assured.

(vi) It invokes the interest of ancestral spirits and their blessing, and by doing so fulfils a duty towards them. This is really a religious expression of the principles described in (v) above, but some of the bridewealth cattle are actually set aside and dedicated to the spirits of the lineage.

422 583 It is important to remember that cattle are held collectively by the family or kinship group in the sense that their disposal is governed by conventions operative within that group. Kinship relationships govern the limitation of rights in cattle. The collection of bridewealth and its transference are not simple transactions between the prospective husband and the father or legal guardian of the bride. Certain persons standing in special relationships to the bridegroom within the kinship structure, and some of them maternal relatives, are expected to assist him in collecting the required number of cattle. Persons standing in special relationships to the bride are entitled to their shares in the distribution of the cattle when received, and these rights have been raised because they are the persons who co-operated in the collection and giving of bridewealth cattle in previous marriages, particularly the marriage of the bride's mother. This principle runs through the conventional form of reciprocal obligations and rights which are found in the kinship structure.[1]

583 Bridewealth is not, therefore, a payment in the sense that the bride is purchased from her family, though clearly the cattle are not regarded as merely tokens in the marriage system. They have economic value of extreme importance to the Nuer, since milk and meat products are

[1] It should be mentioned at once, though the subject is examined more fully later in connexion with divorce laws, that this does not mean that there is not a measure of individual ownership of cattle. Alienation of cattle is governed by definite rules of inheritance, posthumous rights, and present obligations. A Nuer possesses his cattle as an exclusive right in relation to persons of another kinship group, but the cattle he receives as member of his own kinship group are not his exclusive property; their alienation is not possible without a degree of permission from his kinsmen. This is one of the reasons why Nuer do not on the whole sell their cattle. In contrast, cattle received from other sources, by purchase for example, are his exclusive property even in relation to his kinsmen, though if used for marriage they are, as it were, put into the pool and lose this quality in the future.

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

Every one helps in the work of the harvest, for the 243
stalks must be cut down and the heads cut off and placed
upon a sack which has been placed in the yard for that
purpose. The grains of dura are pounded out, then it [422]
becomes the property of the housewife after the seed dura
has been selected and stored for the coming year.

The stalks of dura are often kept for fuel or for making [372]
fences.

If the rainy season has started early there may be a
second crop of dura, but this seldom happens.

The wife must pound the dura and sift it to get the 252
bran out. She pounds it in a hole in the ground which she
has plastered with mud, using a long pole. She usually
chants a song as she pounds, the thud of the pounding
serving as a low accompaniment to her song.

The dura is cooked like mush and forms the main part
of the food of a Nuer. He eats it without salt or sugar;
sometimes he has a little milk on it. Or the dura may be
soaked and then allowed to sour a little, and then cooked,
in order to give the family a little variety in their
meals.

Corn is also eaten, usually being parched. They also 262
chew the dura stalk or the sugar-cane stalk (if they have
it) for the sugar they find in them.

Some wild tubers are eaten, and some kinds of wild
greens. Beans are also eaten, but I know of no Nuer who
plants them in his own village. Men consider these wild
greens effeminate and will not eat them except in times of
famine. Sometimes in times of famine they gather certain [261]
wild grass seeds and cook them as a food.

The Nuer is not inclined to plant any large field and 262
thus be assured of a surplus of food. The Arab merchant 437
comes to his village when the dura is threshed and shows
such an array of beads and cloths that the Nuer is tempted